

REMARKS

A Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement is submitted herewith.

In the Office Action dated August 9, 2005, claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over U.S. Patent No. 6,227,298 (Patel).

As conceded by the Office Action, Patel does not disclose all of the subject matter of claim 1. 8/9/2005 Office Action at 2. Specifically, Applicant respectfully submits that Patel does not disclose or suggest that each of at least two of the three flow conduits includes an *annular path*. Although Patel does state that further embodiments may include multiple valves for use with more than two zones (Patel, 2:24-27), Patel does not disclose or suggest that the addition of flow conduits would include another annular path. In other words, Applicant respectfully submits that Patel does not suggest a flow assembly defining at least three flow conduits to respectively communicate with at least three zones, where each of at least *two* of the flow conduits includes an *annular path*.

If a reference exists that would have suggested a modification of Patel to achieve the claimed invention, Applicant respectfully requests the production of such a reference. Absent this reference, it is respectfully submitted that Patel does not render claim 1 obvious.

With respect to independent claim 9, it is respectfully submitted that Patel does not disclose a flow assembly having at least three flow conduits to respectively communicate with at least three zones, where the flow assembly has a first tube, a first of the flow conduits including an inner bore of the first tube, a second of the flow conduits including a first annular path around the first tube, and a third of the flow conduits including a *second annular path* around the first annular path. This second annular path around the first annular path is not suggested by Patel.

Therefore, a *prima facie* case of obviousness has also not been established with respect to claim 9.

Independent claim 20 is also similarly allowable over Patel, which does not suggest providing a flow assembly having at least three conduits to communicate with at least three zones, where a second of the conduits comprises a first annular path around a first of the conduits, and a third of the conduits comprises a *second annular path around the first annular path*. Therefore, a *prima facie* case of obviousness has also not been established with respect to claim 20.

Dependent claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as corresponding independent claims.

Moreover, claim 19 (which depends indirectly from independent claim 9) recites flow control devices that are actuatable by at least one of electrical signals and fiber optic signals. Patel does not disclose or suggest the use of electrical signals or fiber optic signals to actuate flow control devices. Dependent claims 22 and 23 (which depend from claims 20 and 1, respectively) are also similarly allowable over Patel.

In view of the foregoing, allowance of all claims is respectfully requested. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees and/or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 20-1504 (SHL.0006US).

Respectfully submitted,

Date: Nov. 2, 2005



Dan C. Hu
Registration No. 40,025
TROP, PRUNER & HU, P.C.
8554 Katy Freeway, Suite 100
Houston, TX 77024
Telephone: (713) 468-8880
Facsimile: (713) 468-8883